TO: Principal Veliz and the Leadership Team

FROM: Rebecca Moody

RE: Parent-Teacher Assembly on Voucher Programs

In recent years, school vouchers have become more common as an option for school choice. There are currently 14 states and the District of Columbia that offer some version of a voucher program to parents. Despite their growing prevalence, there is still much debate around the efficacy and ethical implications of voucher programs. Proponents argue that these programs offer traditionally underserved students (e.g., students with special needs, racial/ethical minorities, low-income students) more opportunities for a higher-quality education and increase competition among both private and public schools, which fuels school improvement. Opponents are concerned over discrimination within the admissions processes of participating private schools, cream-skimming, and the diversion of funds from public schools.

In order to educate parents on the current and potential options for school choice, including vouchers, I propose that the school hold a parent-teacher assembly. The assembly would serve to present both sides of the argument to parents. Volunteer participants from both sides of the debate could present evidence to support their positions. After the presentations, an opinion survey could be administered to the parents. In the survey, parents will be asked their position related to school choice and vouchers as well as the likelihood that they would choose to apply for a voucher for their child. Participation in the assembly as well as the results of the survey will be twofold in that they will also aid in determination of cream-skimming. By analyzing what percentages of parents attend as well as their likelihood to utilize vouchers, a survey will help educators see if some underserved students are entirely eliminated from participation based on the parent-side of demand.

This assembly can be held during afterschool hours. It should be open to all students, parents, teachers, faculty, and administration. Invitations can be sent home to all students as well as vocalized via the voicemail delivery system. Teacher should also be instructed to remind students and parents about this assembly during school hours. After the assembly concludes and the results of the survey are analyzed, parents can also be provided with a summary sheet from the meeting so that they may be on the same page as the teachers and administration. I am available to discuss this proposal in more detail at your earliest convenience.